

Employees honored for support of research

by Fran Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — Seven members of the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate support staff have been honored for their contributions to the directorate's research and development mission.

Receiving awards during Heritage Day ceremonies today were: Catherine M. Destito, Alex S. Sisti Comptroller of the Year Award; Paul W. Phister Jr., General Robert C. Mathis Award; David P. Hass, Maj. Gen. Daniel C. Doubleday Award; Brent W. Holmes, Operations and Support Excellence Award; Gary L. Slopka, Robert V. Decker Memorial Award; Mary Jane Hendrickson, Secretary/Clerical of the Year Award; and Judith M. Decker, Technical Support Award.

Destito is assigned as a budget analyst in the Comptroller Division. In that position, she is a specialist on the budget activities within research, development, test and evaluation appropriations. She is recognized by both the AFRL and Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) financial management communities as a functional expert.

A native of Rome, Destito has been a member of the laboratory staff for 32 years. She was also the recipient of the Rome Laboratory Comptroller of the Year Award in 1994.

The Comptroller of the Year Award is named in honor of Alex S. Sisti, a pioneer in the automation of Air Force financial and information systems, who retired in 1998. It is conferred annually to an individual assigned to the Comptroller Division for outstanding contributions to financial management for the directorate.

The Mathis Award, presented each year to a member of the directorate staff for outstanding contributions to community relations, is named for the former Rome Air Development Center (RADC) commander who retired as Air Force Vice Chief of Staff. RADC was renamed Rome Laboratory in 1990 and became part of the AFRL in the fall of 1997.

Phister was cited for his involvement with local charities and community activities during the past year. Those activities included service as Town of Lee Baseball/Softball commissioner; judge for the city of Rome, Mohawk Valley, and the 52nd International Science Fairs; Youth Group leader for Delta United Methodist Church; and a member of the planning committee for the Rome Crop Walk. Phister serves as aerospace strategic planner in the directorate's Business Management Division. He holds a bachelor of science degree from Akron University, master's degrees from the Air Force Institute of Technology and St. Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas; and a doctorate from California Coast University, Santa Ana, Calif. A native of Akron, Ohio, he has been a member of the Rome staff for the past six years, as both an Air Force officer and a civilian employee.

The Doubleday Award is presented annually to a directorate staff member for outstanding management or administrative actions. It is named after the commander of RADC during two periods (1951-54 and 1961-63).

Haas, a five-year Rome employee, is chief of mission systems in the Site Operations Division. In that position, he is responsible for supporting laboratory scientists and engineers with expertise in a wide variety of communications and computer areas.

He was specifically cited for his technical expertise and leadership in advocating, acquiring and managing the telecommunications infrastructure in support of the technical mission of the Rome Research Site.

Holmes, a native of Rome, is chief of Information Systems in the Site Operations Division. He is responsible for managing the information systems support for the site, including computer networks, information assurance, and enterprise services such as e-mail, internet and file storage. The Operations & Support Excellence Award is presented annually to a member of the Operations and Support Division for outstanding customer support.

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Holmes, who joined the laboratory staff six years ago, was cited for his leadership in network operations and information assurance, ensuring a reliable, efficient and secure network to facilitate research at the laboratory.

Slopka, a native of Herkimer, N.Y., is a procurement analyst specialist in the directorate's Contracting Division. In that position, he is responsible for providing guidance and recommending strategy to contracting officers and buyers in the preparation of solicitations and contracts. The Decker Award is presented each year to a member of the division for an outstanding achievement that contributed to the success of the laboratory's mission.

A member of the Rome staff for 15 years, Slopka holds certified professional contract manager and certified associate contracts manager certificates from the National Contract Management Association (NCMA).

Hendrickson, a legal technician in the directorate's Legal Office, has been a member of the directorate staff since the closure of Griffiss Air Force Base in 1995. Her award is presented annually to the outstanding secretarial/clerical member of the directorate.

A native of Rome, Hendrickson was cited for her dedication to the employees of the Legal Office and her initiative in creating the office internet pages, as well as her knowledge and skills to process claims and run the site's tax assistance program. She is a graduate of Rome Free Academy and is currently enrolled in the graphic arts program at Mohawk Valley Community College.

Decker is a paralegal specialist in the Legal Office. In that capacity, she provides technical support to the Rome Research Site's engineers regarding patents and inventions.

Her award is given each year to a civilian (GS-7 and below) or military (E-7 and below) whose position is to provide staff or support service. A native of Oneida, Decker joined the laboratory staff in 1996 after 18 years with Griffiss Air Force Base Legal Office. @

